

## AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELITIST SYNDROME AND POLITICS ON THE EFFICACY OF SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES IN DELTA STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The study assessed the impact of elitist syndrome and politics on the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta State between 2015 and 2023. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument of data collection. A sample of four hundred (400) was drawn for the study using simple random and convenience sampling technique. The method of data analysis included the use of mean and standard deviation and Student T-Test statistical techniques. The study found out that there is a significant difference between government policy and social empowerment programmes in Delta state. It was recommended that the government should make concerted efforts to ensure that social empowerment programmes benefit the masses for which they were design. This is through ensuring that they are handled in ways that make it difficult for elites to have access to them. Also, it was recommended amongst others that there should be a policy framework to tackle issues of pro-rich approach in order to make such that wealthy people do not use their influence to circumvent due process to hijack these programmes. This is by making the process transparent and simple enough to make it easy for the common man to participate. Also, there should be specific targets and means of accessing these targets so that the programmes can be void of corruption. If the programmes are designed for youths, the categories should be spelt and how to get to such categories should be devised. People with integrity should be made to handle these programmes and not necessarily ministries which can be compromised. This way corruption can be tackled and reduced to some level.*

### INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, numerous programmes, as part of government policies, have been introduced and implemented. At the federal level, various governments have embarked on sundry programmes that spanned varying periods of time. For example, the Ibrahim Babangida administration came up with the Better Life for Rural Women in 1987, while the Abacha-led government introduced the Family Support Programme in 1994 and the Family Economic Advancement Programme in 1997. All the programmes were supposedly targeted at the rural people, especially women and geared towards enhancing their livelihood status. Other programmes include the Poverty Alleviation Programme and the National Poverty Eradication Programme introduced by the Obasanjo administration in 2000 and 2001 respectively, the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (Sure-P) of the Jonathan administration and the National Social empowerment Programme (NSIP) which encapsulate the N-power, N-teach, N-health, N-tech, and N-build and other variants introduced by the present Buhari-led administration in 2016. The above programmes were also expectedly met to improve the living standard of the poor.

At the state level, various governments have introduced and implemented different programmes aimed at addressing one problem or the other so as to improve the living standards of the people. In Delta state, for instance, several administrations since 1999, especially the current Okowa-led government introduced and is implementing social empowerment programmes such as the Women Empowerment and Skills Acquisition Programme (WESAP), Rural Youth Skills Acquisition

Programme (RYSAP), Girls Entrepreneurship Skills Training (GEST), Skills Training Entrepreneurship Program (STEP) and the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurship Programme (YAGEP) (Ignatius, 2021). The above programmes were seemingly embarked upon and executed to channel the potentials and energy of youths and women towards entrepreneurship and establish them in viable vocational or agri-business ventures for self-employment and sustainable livelihood (Veracity, 2022).

In the face of the multi-faceted benefits of socio-economic empowerment programmes in reducing poverty, stemming the tide of unemployment, creating small-scale entrepreneurs, improving livelihood standards, enhancing socio-economic status and actualizing high levels of development, the efficiency and effectiveness of social empowerment or social intervention programmes especially in Nigeria seems to be hindered in varying degrees by sundry factors. For example, Adebayo (2014) examined socio-economic policies and programmes in Africa and asserted that they are generally affected by poor policy design and bureaucratic corruption. Also, Hunter and Miazdyek (2014) carried out a study into social welfare programmes in Canada and noted that the country is implementing its own hybrid welfare programming model partly borrowed from the United States of America and Britain and the findings shows that it has moved from a needs based eligibility and social entitlement to models that emphasize selective entitlements, active programming and maximum participation. Golub and McQuay (2015), in their study on "legal empowerment of the poor in the United States emphasized the need to involve the use of law to enhance disadvantaged populations control over their lives through combination and action.

Adetuberu (2016) equally examined social intervention programmes in Nigeria and the findings showed that they are poorly effective due to poor coordination and lack of public involvement in policy implementation programmes. Tochukwu (2019) assessed government social intervention and job creation in Nigeria and the findings reveals that the programmes have not reduced the unemployment and poverty situation, while Holmes and Akinsimisi (2017) investigated social protection programmes in Nigeria and asserted that they are largely uncoordinated and have low coverage due to a combination of constraints particularly political, financial and capacity limitations. Ogbonna (2017) investigated social empowerment scheme, a neglected component of public health care services in Nigeria and the findings of the study revealed that the effectiveness of social empowerment programme is affected by poor funding and poor inter-agency collaboration.

In a similar vein, Jegede, Irewole and Dada (2019) examined youth empowerment as catalyst for sustainable development in Nigeria and the findings indicate that despite different strategies put in place to empower youths, the resulting effects have not been very successful, especially given the persisting high rate of poverty and unemployment. Obayi and Ogbu (2019) also assessed social intervention programmes and rural development in Nigeria with a focus on the federal government's Trader-Moni initiative and emphasized that the programme was poorly designed and did not genuinely tackle poverty alleviation problem among the rural women in Nigeria. Abada and Omeh (2020) examined social intervention schemes and poverty alleviation among Nigerian youths and stressed that social intervention packages by government considerably assisted in reducing poverty among vulnerable youths. While the above studies have reasonably addressed diverse issues concerning social empowerment and intervention programmes and the causal factors responsible for their seeming poor effectiveness, the critical impact of significant factors like politics of empowerment, elitist syndrome, pro-rich approach, systemic corruption, poor monitoring and evaluation, ethic and nepotistic tendencies as well as system of governance on the effectiveness of social empowerment programmes in Nigeria has been largely unstudied. This study therefore seeks to fill the above gaps in the literature.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Concept of Social Empowerment**

Social empowerment as a term does not enjoy consensual definition as it has been approached from different standpoints and purviews. In the words of Bonnie (2006), it is the activities by the government, social agencies and volunteers designed to change and improve social situations of individuals, groups and communities, strengthen their social bonds and encourage internalization of social control. This is in no way false, as social intervention is concerned with enhancement of existing social status-quo and social order within a defined society or territory. However, this definition is not operationally generic as it only reflects sociological perspective to the concept. According to Badu (2018), it is the provision of effective and appropriate means of alleviating social and economic difficulties being faced by people. This definition is multi-disciplinarily suffice-able as it does not view social intervention from the school of thought of one discipline, rather from a generic purview.

Social empowerment is the process of giving individuals or groups the resources, tools, and support they need to engage fully in society, make informed decisions, and exercise their rights (Cornelius, 2022). In line with the above explanation, for people to access chances and realize their full potentials, barriers must be removed as well as discrimination, inequity and other hindrances. Empowerment can occur at various levels, from the individual to the community and the wider society. At the individual level, empowerment can involve providing access to education, healthcare, employment, and other resources that enable individuals to improve their lives and make informed choices. At the community level, empowerment can involve promoting participation, collaboration, and self-help among community members to solve common problems and create a more inclusive and supportive environment. At the societal level, empowerment can involve advocating for policies and laws that protect and promote the rights and interests of disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Social empowerment is closely linked to the concept of social justice, which refers to the fair and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities in society.

Social empowerment is also seen as a key strategy for achieving social justice by enabling individuals and groups to have greater control over their lives, participate more fully in society, and challenge systems of oppression and inequality (Sterling, 2021). One important aspect of social empowerment is the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. Women have historically been marginalized and discriminated against in many societies, and empowering women is essential for achieving gender equality and promoting social justice. This can involve providing education and training opportunities for women, promoting their participation in decision-making processes, and ensuring equal access to healthcare and other resources. It can also involve challenging cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination. Another important aspect of social empowerment is the promotion of economic empowerment. Economic empowerment involves providing individuals and communities with the resources and skills they need to generate income and build sustainable livelihoods. This can involve providing access to credit and financial services, training and education opportunities, and support for entrepreneurship and small business development.

According to Rice (2021), social empowerment which is a social construct aimed at reducing poverty and enhancing socio-economic status can be economic, political, cultural and individual as captured below:

Economic empowerment is important for reducing poverty and promoting economic growth, and it is closely linked to other forms of empowerment such as education, healthcare, and gender equality. It also involves promoting civic engagement and participation. This can involve encouraging people to participate in democratic processes, such as voting and community decision-making, and promoting active citizenship and social responsibility. It can also involve promoting social cohesion and building strong, inclusive communities that are based on mutual respect and understanding. To achieve social empowerment, it is important to address the root

causes of social inequality and discrimination. This can involve challenging stereotypes and prejudices, promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and advocating for policies and laws that protect the rights of disadvantaged and marginalized groups. It also involves building partnerships and alliances between different stakeholders, including government, civil society organizations, and private sector actors.

Political empowerment is also critical for promoting social empowerment. By enabling individuals to participate in the political process, whether through voting, running for office, or advocating for policy change, political empowerment can help to ensure that the voices of all members of society are heard and that policies reflect the needs and interests of all citizens. This is particularly important for marginalized groups, who may be underrepresented in the political process and whose needs may be overlooked in policy making.

Cultural empowerment involves promoting respect for cultural diversity and recognizing the value of different perspectives and experiences. This can be achieved through education, cultural exchange programs, and initiatives that celebrate cultural diversity. By promoting cultural empowerment, we can help to create a more inclusive and tolerant society that values and respects all members of the community. On the other hand, personal empowerment involves helping individuals develop the confidence and skills to take control of their lives and achieve their goals. This can be achieved through mentoring programs, skills training, and counselling services. By promoting personal empowerment, we can help individuals overcome personal and social barriers that may be preventing them from achieving their full potential.

For the purpose of this study, social empowerment is conceptualized as any conscious effort of anybody or institution (be it government or otherwise) that is geared towards providing solutions to existing societal problem of general or particularistic nature, which is bedeviling the members of the society from any aspect of life.

### **Overview of Social Empowerment in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, government had purposively designed series of social empowerment programmes in the time past mainly with a view to solving the incessant problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality. In some point in times, it is categorically geared towards reducing the rate of youth restiveness in volatile areas and states of the federation. At Nigeria's independence in 1960, there were serious of notable youth programmes aimed at facilitating social empowerments especially for the youth population. For instance, Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2018) noted that between 1962-1968, 1970-1974 (National Accelerated Food Production Programme-NAFPP), 1975-1980 and 1981-1985 were designed by various governments to provide basic infrastructure, diversify the economy, reduce the level of unemployment, achieve dynamic self-sustaining growth and raise the living standard of people." In the same trends, Adoba (2015) and Orji (2019) also stressed that the subsequent social empowerment programmes, after 1985 up till 1999, were geared towards small and median enterprises and scale trading, reduction of poverty especially among the youth as well as sectorial engagements in the operationalization of the state economy.

In retrospect, some policies introduced in the 70s aimed at eradicating the poverty in Nigeria are: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, Green Revolution (GR) in 1980, etc. On the one hand, GR and OFN programmed were designed and implemented to increase the production of agricultural output and facilitate the effectiveness of the performance roles of sub-sectors in the agricultural sector (Ibrahim & Umar, 2018). On the other hand, FCPE was established to reduce high level of illiteracy across local areas in Nigeria. Notably, these programmes recorded a lot of laudable achievements by improving the educational and social qualities of many people residing at the rural areas (Agboola & Lamidi, 2017). However, CBN (1998) identified the inability of the programme continuity to poor political will, social instability and peoples' commitment.

### **Implication for Social Empowerment**

Social empowerment programme is basically about uplifting the economic life of people across strata of the society. It is rooted in designed policies which strengthen individual capacities and skills with a view to engaging them in full employment, social life and work. Important area of social empowerment programmes focuses on agriculture, youth training, education, health-related services and job-search assistance (Victor, 2018). Social empowerment programmes have been presented in various forms and their activities are geared towards supporting the existing structures of the public spheres as well as structural functionalism of the social environment at large. There are two essential manifestations of social empowerment programmes in Nigeria, namely volunteerism and formal participation. For this reason, social empowerment programme is a function of Social work which states concentrated attempt to improve the society (Orji, 2019).

The implication of youth roles in socio-economic development is an essential aspect of social empowerment programme. It is simply a developmental mission which can be designed for different age-bracket. The youth involvement in social empowerment programme is a common social responsibility of adult citizens for the sustenance of human livelihood (Bakare, 2010). Moreover, the scheme of social empowerment/intervention programme seems to be organized in most modern societies as a social task that might be observed in a transitory from childhood to adult age. The main psychological characteristic is indicated during the period of role acquisitions in the line of action of social empowerment programme. Nevertheless, there is indeed an expectation from the society on the mandates of the social empowerment programme at different societal stages.

In development theory, the social re-engineering of societal roles remains at the core, not periphery of social empowerment programmes with established linkages to Eriksonian theory. As explicated by Suich (2019), stages of identity and intimacy are characteristic outcomes of gender/martial roles and work commitment of Erikson sequential model of growth and development. While at the centre of the model is the ward and community commitment to the societal development. It is therefore noteworthy that every individual often uses a role context as a guiding role to another stage of responsibility, such as seeking for job, finding life partner, attaining a particular position in respective workplaces, organization either formal or informal among other individual quests in the social environment (Dangana & Akpan, 2019). Hence, the key mechanism of social empowerment/intervention programme is not only meant for recovery or rehabilitation of peoples' experience in crisis, but for socio-economic engagement in an ordinate manner that will facilitate active, social and psychological commitments to the development roles in the respective communities

### **The Delta State Social Empowerment Programmes (2015-2023)**

According to Veracity (2022), on May 29, 2015, Governor Okowa during his inaugural speech stated that job creation would be the bedrock of his administration, "Job creation will be the cornerstone of all our policies; it is the common thread running through our policies and programmes in education, health, agriculture, industrialization, and infrastructure development. In his statement, the governor emphasized the need to embrace and embark on projects and programmes until when he is convinced and satisfied with the job creation content. Reflecting our strong conviction that deliberates government focus and action needed to stem the tide of rising unemployment, we shall deploy and harness every resource available, especially through agrobusinesses, to create jobs and put our people to work."

True to his words, the Okowa-led administration has been irrevocably committed to changing the narrative by nurturing and supporting youths and women, leading to the emergence and growth of so many small businesses across the state. The special purpose vehicles through which the potentials and energy of youths and women are being harnessed towards entrepreneurship are the State Government's job and wealth creation programmes such as the Skills Training and

Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP), the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), the Rural Youth Skills Acquisition (RYSA), the Women Empowerment Skills Acquisition Programme (WESAP), the Girls Entrepreneurship Skills Training (GEST), the Information and Communication Technology Youth Empowerment Programme (ICTYEP), and the Widows Welfare Scheme. These are socio-economic intervention programmes aimed at training/re-training and establishing targeted beneficiaries in viable vocational or agri-business ventures for self-employment and a sustainable means of livelihood (Veracity, 2022).

These entrepreneurship development programmes- STEP, YAGEP, WESAP, RYSA, GEST and ICT-YEP- have birthed so many Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs.) Of course, the overall goal is to achieve build-up of viable MSMEs that will drive the economic diversification and development in the state.

### **Skills Training Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) (2015)**

In August, 2015, two flagship programmes, STEP and YAGEP, were launched and implemented by the Office of the Job Creation Officer with the- Gertrude Onyekachukwu-Uteh overarching goals to equip participants with the technical know-how, vocational skills, life skills and resources to become self-employed and employers of labour. On 26th August, 2019, the State Legislature passed the Job and Wealth Creation Law 2019 to strengthen the office and to provide legal backing to its operations. To this effect, it was institutionalized and upgraded to the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau to enable it outlive the present administration.

With an initial figure of 1,329 STEP/YAGEP beneficiaries trained and successfully established the 2015/2016 pioneer cycle. The number of beneficiaries increased annually to 6,074 with the 2020/2021 cycle which was the sixth cycle. Life changing testimonies abound of their success stories as a good number of them are making remarkable progress, have become trainers or have employed one or more persons to work with them. While many have sustained their enterprises, some have diversified into other businesses to boost their financial base, exporting their products and making remarkable milestones. The majority of the beneficiaries who enrolled into the programme single are now married, evidence of improved livelihood. As part of its commitment to ensure business success and growth, no fewer than 83 entrepreneurs who are beneficiaries of STEP, YAGEP and GEST recently received cash awards of N.5M each from the Governor to boost their enterprises.

In fulfilment of his promise to upscale the job and wealth creation scheme during his May 29, 2019 inaugural address, Governor Okowa indeed broadened the scope of the scheme. Thus, to meaningfully engage more youths, especially those in the rural areas, including girls and women, the Ministries of Youth Development; Women, Social and Community Development; Science and Technology received the State Executive Council's approval to begin similar programmes as RYSA, WESAP, ICT-YEP respectively, each having same implementation template as STEP. To further uphold his leadership style of all-inclusiveness, Governor Okowa initiated the Girls Entrepreneurship Skills Training (GEST) which was implemented by the Girls Empowerment Office. Notably, also, the Widows Welfare Scheme under the aegis of the Senior Special Assistant to Governor Okowa on Social empowerment Programmes and State Coordinator on Widows Welfare Scheme has been on course right from the first tenure (Veracity, 2022).

### **Widows Welfare Scheme (WWS) (2016)**

The welfare scheme for widows termed "Widows Alert: Okowa's Phenomenon" is domiciled in the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor Okowa on Social empowerment Programmes and State Co-ordinator on Widows Welfare Scheme. It has enrollees who are predominately aged, illiterate and have difficulties at financial independence. The scheme began in 2018 and has covered 5,607 widows in the state. The programme is non-political as it covers

enrolled indigent widows across all 25 LGAs, ethnic groups, communities and religious groups in the state. It pays monthly stipends to all enrollees, provides them with free healthcare under the State Government's Contributory Health Insurance Scheme among other social interventions meant to ameliorate their sufferings. Empowerment of women is an effective tool for development. This is laudable as most of them within the productive age now engage in meaningful businesses to cater for their children's basic needs and education.

#### **Women Empowerment and Skills Acquisition Programme (WESAP) (2019)**

The empowerment of women contributes immensely to the growth of every society, beginning from the home. As the saying goes, "When you empower a woman, you empower a nation." WESAP is designed to enroll and retrain upskilled women, majorly Fashion Design and Tailoring, who are unable to establish themselves for lack of funds, and unskilled women who are freshers in the skill in enterprises as Hairdressing, Confectionery, Makeover and Decoration. Selected women are retrained or trained, as the case may be, for four weeks or eight weeks and at the completion of the trainings, they are given start-up packs according to their trades to begin their businesses. A total number of 686 women have so far benefitted from WESAP at the ratio of 236 beneficiaries for upskilled and 450 for unskilled. In addition, 600 female petty traders received the sum of N20, 000.00 each to boost their businesses to transform them from a state of liability to that of reliability.

#### **The Rural Youth Skills Acquisition Programme (RYSA) (2020)**

In furtherance of Governor Okowa's commitment to make youths in the rural areas self-reliant, stem youth restiveness, discourage rural-urban drift and to grow local economy, the Governor through RYSA has trained and established 776 rural youths in the pioneer 2020 RYSA cycle, with 786 currently training in the second cycle. In the selection process, three youths are selected from each electoral ward with only unemployed youths, who have basic knowledge in their chosen areas of skill, chosen for training for a period of two or three months. The skills under RYSA are Catering and Confectionary; Plumbing; Hairdressing and Makeover; Interlocking and Tiling; Woodwork and Furniture; POP and Screed Making; Electrical Installations and Repairs; Aluminium Profiling; Welding and Fabrication; Fashion Designing. This once again underscores the efforts made at developing the state economy in the rural areas.

#### **Girls Entrepreneurship Skills Training (GEST) (2020)**

To uplift the economic and social status of underprivileged girls in society, GEST was initiated, designed and implemented. This serves as a solution to gender discrimination, poverty and low self-esteem among the girl-child between 18 to 30 years. Under GEST, two programme cycles have been successfully completed with a total number of 1,251 previously unemployed girls re-trained and established in various enterprises of their choice as in Fashion Design, Hairdressing, ICT, and Cleaning Agent production, Makeover, Photography, Videography, Leather Works, Confectionary and Disk Jockey. Most of them are already doing well and contributing their quota to the development of the state.

#### **Information and Communication Technology Youth Empowerment (ICT-YEP) (2021)**

In ICT-YEP scheme acquisition programme, 593 beneficiaries have emerged in its first cycle and they were equipped with necessary ICT skills training to enable self-employment and business development for them in the state. It is worthy to note that beneficiaries under this category were basically graduates of tertiary institutions, trained on various skills such as Mobile and Web Application Development; Networking and Telecommunications; Inverter and Solar Systems Installation and Maintenance; Home and Office-based Networking; Home and Office Security

Solutions, and Fiber Optics Infrastructure and Project Management Skills. The 593 beneficiaries have since received starter packs to start their businesses according to Veracity (2022). The market for these growing enterprises is technology driven. Equally, ICT-YEP has great prospects in Nigeria and is being harnessed to break new frontiers for Delta teeming youths.

#### **Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM) (2021)**

The success of the job creation programmes cannot be adequately x-rayed without reference to the roles played by the Directorate of Youth Monitoring and Mentoring (DYMM) in sustaining the successful outcomes. DYMM is an innovation of the Okowa-led administration, established to strengthen and sustain the job and wealth creation programmes. Thus, beneficiaries are adequately equipped with training/post establishment support, guidance and business clinics to ensure lasting success. In other words, the mechanism involves tracking, monitoring and mentoring right from the training centres to beneficiaries' shops after establishment. These have helped to reduce the number of drop-outs from the programmes and ensured a proper documentation of the business status of each beneficiary (Veracity, 2022).

From the above discussions on the efforts of the Okowa-led administration in putting-up different social intervention programmes like Women Empowerment and Skills Acquisition Programme (WESAP), The Rural Youth Skills Acquisition Programme (RYSA), Girls Entrepreneurship Skills Training (GEST), Skills Training Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP), Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), Widows Welfare Scheme (WWS) as well as Information and Communication Technology Youth Empowerment Programme (ICT-YEP), it is crystal clear that Governor Okowa and his working team have done well by conceiving and initiating these laudable programmes. It is instructive to note that the successful implementation of these programmes may be affected by some constraining factors like politics of empowerment, elitist syndrome, pro-rich approach, systemic corruption, poor monitoring and evaluation, ethic and nepotistic tendencies as well as system of governance because of the peculiar nature of Nigerian system and Delta State in particular.

#### **Empirical Studies on Government Social Empowerment Programmes**

Adebayo (2014), in his analysis of socio-economic policies and initiatives in Africa made the claim that ineffective policy formulation and bureaucratic corruption frequently have an impact on these initiatives. Additionally, a study on social welfare programs in Canada was conducted by Hunter and Miazdyek in 2014. They noted that the country is implementing its own hybrid welfare programming model, which was partially adapted from the United States of America and Britain. The study's findings show that it has transitioned from models that emphasize social entitlements and needs-based eligibility to models that emphasize selective entitlements, active programming, and maximum participation. Golub and McQuay (2015) in their study on "legal empowerment of the poor in the United States", emphasized the need to involve the use of law to enhance disadvantaged populations control over their lives through combination and action.

Adetuberu (2016) equally examined social intervention programmes in Nigeria and the findings showed that they are poorly effective due to poor coordination and lack of public involvement in policy implementation programmes. Tochukwu (2019) assessed government social intervention and job creation in Nigeria and the findings reveals that the programmes have not reduced the unemployment and poverty situation, while Holmes and Akinsimisi (2017) investigated social protection programmes in Nigeria and asserted that they are largely uncoordinated and have low coverage due to a combination of constraints particularly political, financial and capacity limitations. Ogbonna (2017) investigated social empowerment scheme, a neglected component of public health care services in Nigeria and the findings of the study revealed that the effectiveness of social empowerment programme is affected by poor funding and poor inter-agency collaboration.

Eze (2018) examined government social intervention schemes and job creation in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on former President Good Luck Ebele Jonathan social intervention program (SURE-P) and President Muhammadu Buhari social intervention program (N-POWER). The study adopted employment theory and documentary method was used to gather data and the obtained data were analysed using content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that Government social intervention programmes undoubtedly is a sine-qua-non for job creation in Nigeria as it has been evidently proven by SURE-P and N-Power that their activities have led the decrease in unemployment rate in Nigeria. However, their performance has been hampered by certain maladroit eventualities culminating into the rising of the rate of unemployment despite their existence. The study recommended that Job creation programmes should be established subject to statistics of graduates provided by all tertiary educational and technical institutions present within the country, every succeeding government should evaluate the social intervention programmes of the preceding government, adopt, implement and sustain the positive impacting ones and abrogate the negative ones; a policy/programme monitoring committee should be created by the Nigerian government at each level of government to monitor all job creation programme and gather performance report and disciplinary measures such as compulsory dismissal from service should be adopted and implemented against anyone whether within the programme implementation body or an employee or job seeker found wanting of any corrupt practice within the government social intervention programme.

Brenyah (2018) examines the implementation of social protection interventions in Africa: The trend in the outcomes of free basic education in Ghana, Malawi, Kenya and Uganda. This review assessed the outcome of the implementation of free basic education in Africa, using Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi as a test case. Thirty-Seven (37) published documents were used for the study. The study is underpinned by Bagozzi's Goal Theory and conceptualized with knowledge gaps and knowledge management strategies. The study noted that, the free basic education policy has increased primary school net enrolment rates in these countries holding all other confounders constant. The study also revealed that, the implementation of the free basic education policy did not reduce educational expenditure as expected as school authorities continue to levy pupils. The objective of removing financial barriers was therefore not met, and the quality of teaching and learning delivery in most schools has fallen due to high pupils-teacher ratio and other implementation challenges. Based upon these findings, the study concluded that, there is the need for constant stakeholder interaction, efficient financial practices, fiscal space creation, provision of more educational infrastructure, recruitment of additional teachers, measures to ensure quality of teaching and learning delivery and effective monitoring of social protection intervention programmes in Africa.

In a similar vein, Jegede, Irewole and Dada (2019) examined youth empowerment as catalyst for sustainable development in Nigeria and the findings indicate that despite different strategies put in place to empower youths, the resulting effects have not been very successful, especially given the persisting high rate of poverty and unemployment. Obayi and Collins (2019) also assessed social intervention programmes and rural development in Nigeria with a focus on the federal government's Trader-Moni initiative and emphasized that the programme was poorly designed and did not genuinely tackle poverty alleviation problem among the rural women in Nigeria.

Abada and Omeh (2020) investigates social intervention schemes and poverty alleviation among Nigerian. Methodologically, the study utilized qualitative method while generating its data and analysed in content. The theoretical framework of analysis is significantly anchored on the empowerment. The findings of the study revealed that social intervention packages by government had help in alleviating the vulnerable youths. The paper strongly recommends among others; the strengthening of executive capacity and institutions involved.

Oyedele and Igbokwe (2021) assessed the impact and challenges of social empowerment programmes in Nigeria. The study relies solely on secondary data in providing information on the

social empowerment programmes in relation to their outputs and outcomes. The study discussed the impacts of social empowerment programmes, such as generation of employment for the youth, re-prioritisation of agricultural sector, provision of enabling environment and discouragement of 'brain-drain'. The study equally analyses some of the key challenges like policy inconsistency, unwieldy scope of the programmes and inadequate funding and concluded that the acquisition of social empowerment roles in youth employment is a universal social task of adult social livelihood sustenance. The study ended by recommending that government should intensify efforts on social empowerment programmes for youth employment generation.

Onyishi and Ogbu (2021) assessed social intervention programmes and rural development in Nigeria using Federal Government's Trader-Moni initiative as a case study. The study followed the analytical framework of endogenous development theory which explains rural development as a product of combination, animation and maximization of rural resources. Diagrammatized on the resource-based model of rural development, the study observed the triangulation of documented data from government publications, interview of 7 critical informants reflecting the views of programme desk officers in each of the 6 area councils in Abuja and one from the Bank of Industry (BOI) which is an institutional framework for the implementation of the policy. Correspondingly, questionnaire instrument was used to elicit opinions of sampled beneficiaries from the five Area Councils. The findings of the study showed that Trader-Moni has contributed to a feeling that government cares about the development of rural economy in FCT through savings mobilization, credit delivery and the diversification of investment opportunities in FCT. The findings of the study equally revealed that consultations through the traditional institutions are not error-proof, the criteria for determining beneficiaries have been faulty and the timing of the implementation of the Trader-Moni scheme is politically suspicious.

The study concluded by recommending that the amount of Trader-Moni loans slot allotted to FCT, Abuja should be increased and the loan money per beneficiary should be appreciably increased in line with the general price level; traditional rulers and other representative cells in rural areas should be consulted in the next phase of the scheme in order to truly determine the supposed target beneficiaries; distribution of social benefit such as Trader-moni should be done without any form of politically tainted considerations; loan amount should be in response to the need of the rural people considering their respective local contents- initiatives and resources; the implementation framework should be grassroots oriented so that a bottom-up structure drives the process.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study hinged on group theory. The group theory believes that group interest and attitude are influential factors in determining public policies. This is largely because public policy is the product of group struggle. As Latham (2000) rightly articulated public policy is the equilibrium reached in the various groups struggling at any given moment, and it represents a balance which the contending factions or groups constantly strive to weight in their favour. As different interest groups struggle among themselves to influence public policy, actual policy-making in government tends to tilt towards the groups that are gaining in influence against the others. Thus, public policy, at any given time, will reflect the interests of the dominant groups within the political system.

Dye (1972) stressed that individuals are important in politics only they act as part of or on behalf of group interests. The group therefore becomes the essential bridge between individuals and the government. Since politics is basically the struggle among groups in order to influence public policy, the task of the government is to manage group conflict by establishing rules of the game in the group struggle, arranging compromises, balancing interests, enacting compromises within the form of public policy and enforcing these compromises. The influence of groups is determined by their numbers, wealth, organizational strength, leadership, access to decision-makers and internal cohesion. A policy will move within the direction desired by the influential

groups and faraway from the desires of the groups having weak influence.

Therefore, the influence of groups is decided by their numbers, economic power, strength of their organization and leadership and their closeness to the policy-makers. Group theory rests on the contention that interaction and struggle among groups that are collections of individuals that may in the spirit of shared attitudes or interests, make claims upon other groups in society. Thus, it becomes a political interest when it makes a claim through or upon any of the institutions of the government and public policy at any given time will reflect the interests of these who are in a dominant position.

All the same, the group theory is criticized because it overstates the importance of groups and understates the independent role that public officials play in the policy process. It is also seen to be misleading and inefficient because it seeks to explain politics or policy formulation in terms of group struggle without giving attention to other factors which independently affect the policy-making process. Another weakness of the approach is that many people, especially the underprivileged and disadvantaged, are either not represented or only poorly represented within the group struggle.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The descriptive survey design was used in this investigation. The population of the study comprised of all management and senior staff from the Ministries of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Commerce and Industry as well as Finance that have jurisdiction relating to job creation and empowerment in Delta State, the Desk Officers in all the twenty five (25) Local Government Areas (LGA) in Delta State as well as the beneficiaries in the various LGAs. Sixty (60) management and senior staff from the Ministries Agriculture and Natural Resources, Commerce and Industry, Finance that have jurisdiction relating to job creation and empowerment in Delta State, the Desk Officers in six (6) Local Government Areas (LGA) in Delta State as well as three hundred and sixty (360) beneficiaries in six local government areas in Delta State made up the study's sample. That is, twenty (20) management and senior staff from each sampled ministry and sixty (60) beneficiaries from each sampled local government area including the six (6) Desk Officers in those six local government areas across the three senatorial districts in the state. In choosing the above sample for the study, the multi-stage sampling technique was employed which involved the use of simple random technique and convenience or opportunity sampling technique. The simple random technique was used in selecting the six local government areas across the three senatorial districts, while convenience or opportunity sampling technique was used in selecting the management and senior staff of the three ministries as well as the three hundred and sixty (360) beneficiaries of the Delta State Social Empowerment Programmes. The use of simple random technique is evident to the fact that all the twenty-five (25) local government areas in Delta State have equal chance of being selected. The use of convenience or opportunity sampling technique is based on the fact that the researcher selected whatever sampling units that are conveniently available in each of the sampled local government areas who are willing and ready to attend to the questionnaire items. Only two sources were used in this study to gather data. These sources are both primary and secondary. Three specialists from the Department of Political Science, Novena University, Ogume's evaluated the instrument's face, content, and construct validity.

Cronbach Alpha base test was used to assess the instrument's dependability. Using Cronbach's alpha (CA) based test, the instrument dependability was measured and evaluated. CA offers an estimate of the indicator inter-correlations; a value of 0.7 or greater is considered acceptable, while a value of less than 0.7 denotes low dependability or reliability (Seckaran, 2013). The result from the Cronbach alpha was 0.82. This study employed the mean and standard deviation, and all of the null hypothesis developed for the study were evaluated for significance using Student T test to determine the mean difference of the set of scores. The replies were graded using a Likert

scale of 4, 3, 2, and 1 for Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) respectively. Data obtained from the field were numerically coded and sorted. Student T test were utilized since it is equally effective when there are two quantitative variables and because it may be used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the mean of two variables.

#### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND RESULT

This chapter focuses on the researcher's presentation and interpretation of data gathered during fieldwork. Although 398 questionnaires were sent, only 377 copies of the administered questionnaires were recovered, with 21 missing. This indicates that 95% of the questionnaires were recovered, whereas 5% were lost, which is sufficient for analysis. As a result, this figure served as the basis for data analysis. The information provided here includes descriptive statistics as well as the hypotheses that were tested.

#### Analysis of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	154	40.0
	Females	223	60.0
	Total	377	100.0
Educational Qualification	OND	123	32.6
	HND/B.A./B.Sc.	121	32.1
	M.A./M.Sc.	107	28.4
	PhD.	26	6.9
	Total	377	100.0
Ministry/Department/Agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources	122	32.4
	Ministry of Commerce and Industry	185	49.1
	Ministry of Finance	70	18.5
	Total	377	100.0

*Source: Fieldwork, 2023*

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents that participated in the survey. On sex distribution, majority of the respondents are females with 60.0% and males with 40.0%. Educational qualification distribution of the respondents revealed that majority of the respondents are OND holders with 32.6%, HND/B.A./B.Sc. had 32.1%, those who are M.A./M.Sc. holders had 28.4% and those with PhD. had 6.9%. Ministry/Department/Agency distribution shows that majority of them work in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with 49.1%. Others work in the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources with 32.4% and Ministry of Finance with 18.5%.

#### Presentation of Analysis based on Research Questions Answered

**Research Question 1:** To what extent as the politics of empowerment affected the effectiveness of social empowerment programmes in Delta state?

Table 2: Respondents' responses on the politics of empowerment and the effectiveness of social empowerment programmes in Delta state

S/ N	ITEMS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	Social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been plagued by the politic of empowerment.	2.62	.72	+
2	The implementation of social empowerment	2.51	.70	+

	programmes in Delta state has been bedeviled by the politics of empowerment.			
3	The quality of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been affected by the politics of empowerment.	2.59	.75	+
4	The efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been undermined by the politics of empowerment.	2.65	.80	+

Source: Fieldwork, 2023, Note: + means affirmative response and – means a negative response  
Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation scores on the politics of empowerment and how it affects the effectiveness of social empowerment programmes in Delta state. Data from the table indicates that respondents were positive that social empowerment programmes in Delta state have been plagued by the politic of empowerment. This is attested to with the mean value of 2.62 that is above the benchmark mean value of 2.50. Also, respondents stated that the implementation of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been bedeviled by the politics of empowerment. The mean score of 2.51 obtained for this item indicates a positive response from the respondents. Furthermore, respondents affirmed that the quality of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been affected by the politics of empowerment. This is given with the mean score of 2.59 that is above the benchmark mean value of 2.50. Data from the table also show that respondents agree to the fact that the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been undermined by politics of empowerment. This is given with a mean score of 2.65 which is above the adopted mean score of 2.50 for the study. The standard deviation scores of 0.72, 0.70, 0.75 and 0.80 help to explain the opinion of the respondents in relation to whether they all agree to the issues raised or they disagree. The scores show that respondents have similar opinion in respect of the issues raised in the table.

### Hypothesis One

Ho: There is no significant difference between the politics of empowerment and the effectiveness of social empowerment programmes in Delta state.

Table 3: T-Test Analysis for hypothesis one

		Test Value = 0			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
		T cal	Df	T crit	Sig. (2-Mean tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
politics of empowerment effectiveness of social empowerment programmes in Delta state	of	47.646	376	0.1946	.000	2.06593	1.9807	2.1512
			376		.000	1.89286	1.8243	1.9615

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 shows that the T test calculated value is 47.7, the T test critical value is 0.19 and the difference of freedom is 376 with a probability value of 0.000 that shows the significance of the values obtained under a two tailed test. From the scores obtained, it is seen that the T test

calculated value of 47.7 is greater than the T test critical value of 0.19. Also, the probability value of 0.000 shows that a significant difference in the mean score at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is a significant difference between the politics of empowerment and the effectiveness of social empowerment programmes in Delta state.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent as elitist syndrome affected the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state?

Table 4: Respondents' responses on the elitist syndrome and its affect on the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state

S/ N	ITEMS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	Social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been undermined by elitist syndrome.	2.77	.88	+
2	The execution of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been constrained by elitist syndrome.	2.82	.79	+
3	The quality of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been plagued by elitist syndrome.	2.66	.73	+
4	The efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been undermined by elitist syndrome.	2.85	.85	+

Source: Fieldwork, 2023, Note + means affirmative response and – means a negative response

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation scores on the elitist syndrome and its affect on the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state. Response from the table reveals that social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been undermined by elitist syndrome. This is attested to with the mean value of 2.77 that is above the benchmark mean value of 2.50. Respondents also affirmed that the execution of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been constrained by elitist syndrome. This is attested to by the mean score of 2.82 obtained for this second item that indicates positive responses from the respondents. It can also be seen from the table that respondents affirmed that the quality of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been plagued by elitist syndrome.. This is given with the mean score of 2.66 that is above the benchmark mean value of 2.50. Data from the table also show that respondents agree to the fact that the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state has been undermined by elitist syndrome. This is given with a mean score of 2.85 which is above the adopted mean score of 2.50 for the study. The standard deviation scores of 0.88, 0.79, 0.73 and 0.85 help to explain the opinion of the respondents in relation to whether they all agree to the issues raised or they disagree. The scores show that respondents have similar opinion regarding the issues raised in the table.

### Hypothesis two

Ho: There is no significant difference between elitist syndrome and the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state

Table 5: T-Test Analysis for hypothesis two

Test Value = 0							
	T cal	Df	T crit	Sig. tailed)	(2-Mean Difference	95% Interval Difference Lower	Confidence of the Upper
elitist syndrome	54.052	376	0.1946	.000	2.88594	2.7810	2.9909

the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state	376	.000	2.20159	2.1078	2.2954
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Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 5 shows that the T test calculated value is 54.1, the T test critical value is 0.19 and the difference of freedom is 376 with a probability value of 0.000 that shows the significance of the values obtained under a two tailed test. From the scores obtained, it is seen that the T test calculated value of 54.1 is greater than the T test critical value of 0.19. Also, the probability value of 0.000 shows that a significant difference in the mean score at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no significant difference between elitist syndrome and the efficacy of social empowerment programmes in Delta state.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of this study, the researchers conclude that, there is a significant relationship between social empowerment programmes and implementation in Delta State. As such, the following recommendations have been outlined:

1. The government should make concerted efforts to ensure that social empowerment programmes benefit the masses for which they were designed. This can be achieved by ensuring that they are pro-poor both in approach and practice.
2. There should be a policy framework aimed at developing key performance parameters and indicators that will serve as a benchmark for assessing the efficacy of social empowerment programmes.

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